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W I T H

Some OBSERVATIONS on the PLAN of DEFENCE
suggested by the EARL of SHELBURNE, and some
Thoughts on the Propriety of Military Exercises on
Sunday, and on the Necessity of a SCOTCH MILITIA.

BY A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT. 2

Where Men are unfit for War, the Fault is not in the Nature
or Situation of the Place, but in the Carelessness or Defect
of the Magistrate. MACHIAVEL'S Discourses, B. 1. Ch. 21.

L O N D O N:
PRINTED FOR G. KEARSLEY, FLEET-STREET.
M D C C L X X I I .

1780. 5546

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

WHEN the public at large seem to be peculiarly impressed with the apprehension of depredations upon our coasts, it is surely unnecessary to make any apology for a publication of this nature. Notwithstanding the late glorious events in the West-Indies, we are still in point of naval force inferior to our enemies. It is necessary, therefore, that we should improve our present imperfect system of internal defence, otherwise we can neither be safe at home, nor can we take effectual advantage, of the late happy turn, in the tide of our affairs.

The author has to regret that it is his misfortune to differ with a very respectable statesman in regard to the propriety of arming the towns, because he apprehends that such a system may probably be the parent of popular disorders. As defence however, is the great object of every political society, notwithstanding the possible danger of such a plan, it ought to be adopted, unless a better one can be established in its room. He has ventured to state his opinion upon this subject, and he hopes it will appear that exercising

CONSIDERATIONS

O N

Militias and Standing Armies.

C H A P. I.

Of the different Modes of providing for national Defence.

ALL well governed states ought ever to be prepared to defend themselves, or to annoy their enemies. This cannot be effected without a military force. That force must either be perpetually in arms, or only disciplined occasionally. The first is termed a standing army, the other a militia.

A standing force is certainly attended with this advantage, that it does in general preserve a great superiority in the field, over *rare and undisciplined militias*. But this circumstance in its favour is counterbalanced by the many disadvantages attending a species of defence, which is so expensive to the state, so destructive to industry, and dangerous to freedom.

The fatal experience of many ages, has fully proved the enormous expence of standing armies : Europe now groans under the many heavy burdens which they have occasioned ; and instead of decreasing, they are likely to become still more ruinous and oppressive. Every prince (as Montesquieu well observes) keeps as many armies in pay, as if he dreaded the extirpation of his people by a foreign invasion ; and in proportion as one state augments the number of its troops, the neighbouring states of course do the same ; so that none are gainers, and the ruin is general. The wealth and commerce of the universe not being able to counteract the baneful consequences of a system which must depend for its support upon the increasing taxes, and the oppression of the people.*

As standing armies are the props of arbitrary power, it is scarcely possible that they should not ultimately prove highly unfavourable to industry ; for though a nation, at the first establishment of military force, trusting to it for security and protection, may for some time apply itself to labourious employments, yet industry can never be permanent where property is exposed to the plunder of a tyrant, or to military licentiousness.† Besides,

* Spirit of Laws, l. 13. c. 17.

† In arbitrary governments, no man is secure in the enjoyment of what he has, and consequently no man is industrious in acquiring property, or frugal to preserve it. And where military government is established, it is by plunder

when a standing army is kept up, its labour is lost to the state during the whole year, even in time of peace, when it is a useless burden upon the nation; whereas a militia, according to our regulation, is exercised only one month in the year, and therefore in time of peace as much labour is lost to the community by keeping up fifty thousand regulars, as by six hundred thousand militia. But a militia, when properly regulated, is far from being so pernicious to industry.* For it either excludes artists and manufacturers, and is confined to husbandmen, who can spare a month's labour in the year without any public detriment; or it is exercised on festival days only, as is the case in Switzerland, when the men would otherwise be idle.

The taxes levied in order to support numerous bodies of mercenary forces, is one of the greatest checks that industry can meet with; for no man can toil with diligence, or with satisfaction, when he knows that a large proportion of his labour must go to the maintenance of men, who hold every species of industry in the highest ridicule and contempt. The natural consequence of this is, that

der that men expect to enrich themselves, not by industry or labour. Parliamentary Debates.

* Geneva and Switzerland may be cited to prove, that a well regulated militia is far from being incompatible with industry. Nay, the militia of Holland defeated the regular forces of Spain, and at the same time established those arts and that commerce which have since raised the United Provinces to their present flourishing situation.

the people take a dislike to their occupations, and the wretched example of sloth and inactivity shewn by the army, is soon followed by the rest of the nation. Thus a standing army is expensive to a state, whilst at the same time it checks that industry, and dries up those very sources by which that expence can be supported.

But in a country like Britain, which boasts of its liberty, and where I believe we are as free as we are entitled to be by our luxury and corruption; this seems to be the strongest objection to a standing army, that the rights and privileges of a free people (if such forces are established) must indeed be precarious.*

In England it has been said, as our army is commanded by men of family and fortune, who have an interest in the peace and civil prosperity of this nation, superior to their private interest as soldiers, it is impossible that our liberties can be

* The individuals of which standing armies are composed, are miserable from the tyranny exercised over them, and are themselves the cause of misery to their fellow citizens from the tyranny they exercise. But it will be said that they defend the nation from foreign enemies. Alas! could a foreign conqueror occasion more wretchedness than such defenders. When he who calls himself my protector, has stripped me of my property, and deprived me of my freedom, I cannot retain him very cordial thanks, when he tells me, that he will defend me from every other robber.

Moore's Travels, vol. 1. p. 195.

in any danger from them or those whom they command. But this is slippery ground to stand on. For, in the first place, our officers, like those of other armies are paid; nay, appointed by the crown and from that source alone can expect to rise in their profession; they are subjected to the orders of every superior officer almost without limitation †, and if they refuse to obey, may be punished with death: nay, if in consequence of arbitrary steps and oppressive measures being taken, any patriotic officer should attempt to throw up his commission, without leave from the crown, by the present laws, he might be tried by a court-martial and shot as a deserter. ‡

Besides whatever the officers may be, every one must acknowledge that the private soldiers of a standing army, are recruited from the very dregs of the people; who by idleness, extravagance and other vices, have been driven into the army. Such men might be apt to obey the commands of a

† By the Mutiny-Bill, officers are only bound to be obedient *to lawful commands*; but this is so vague and indefinite an expression that some explanation seems to be necessary for the security of men of public spirit.

‡ In time of war, it might be dangerous to permit officers to throw up their commissions, without leave from the crown; but in peace, when our liberties are most likely to be attacked, it might be permitted without any danger to the state.

sovereign

sovereign however unjust and arbitrary, however opposite to the interest of the nation or the wishes of their commanders. Even their service instead of being confined to a certain number of years is unlimited and may last for life*. Thus by denying them any prospect of regaining their situations as citizens, we give them but little reason to protect that freedom of which they do not partake. A standing army, therefore notwithstanding all our imaginary safeguards, may be as dangerous to the liberties of Britain, as it has proved elsewhere, and unless a military spirit is propagated among the people in general, if we escape being conquered by a foreign enemy, we may expect to be enslaved by domestic janizaries and a tyrannical sultan.

Nor are these the only disadvantages of a standing army; for if arms become a separate profession, those who subsist by them have an interest directly opposite to the interest of the nation †. Wars and tumults, in many respects advantageous

* Many unsuccessful attempts have been made to shorten the duration of a soldier's servitude, and indeed there is a strange absurdity in the idea of their being bound for life, if the army is only an annual one. Properly they can only be enlisted for one year, but that period may afterwards be prolonged by parliament.

† If soldiers are unjustly accused of exciting wars, they have not without reason been condemned for protracting them when begun. Marshall Byron's sentiment is too general in the army. "When the enemies of our kings are conquered, their generals are no longer thought of. J

to the foldiers, are fubverfive of national felicity. In peace he is ufelefs and unemployed, whereas in time of war, he has in profpect laurels, plunder and preferment. Hence fays Machiavel, it is natural for a foldier to obftruct peace, and to urge on war, and therefore princes who wifh to prevent any diforders in the ftate, and are defirous of living in peace and fafety, ought to have their armies compofed of fuch perfons only, as will take up arms freely in defence of their country whenever neceffity fhould require, and when peace is concluded will as readily return to their former trades and occupations*.

But above all it ought to be remembered that if a ftanding army is long kept up in any country, it alters the very nature of the people. Tho' in former times they have ever been fo much renowned for courage and refolution, yet if they are for any time unacquainted with arms or unaccuftomed to difcipline, they become meer poltroons, terrified at the fight of a hostile weapon, or the very name of a foldier; and to add to this evil, as the army muft be recruited from this dafardly and effeminate race, however formidable it may be to

“ is our intereft therefore (fays he to his fon) to protract the war, that we may not be laid afide as unſerviceable.” Vide Bayle’s Dictionary. Voce Gontaut (Armand de) Baron of Biron. Note. D.

* Vide Machiavel on the Art of War. L. 1. c. 4. Alfo Blackſton’s Commentaries. Book 1. c. 13.

the unhappy people by whom it is supported, it will never be able to defend their country against a daring invader*. Such an army may be necessary to states in possession of distant territories, or fond of foreign acquisitions; but a nation only inclined to defend itself, if its militia is well regulated scarcely requires any other mode of protection. Such a difference there is between attacking an enemy's country, and defending our own.

In fact, an army acting on the defensive only, and in full possession of the country which is the theatre of war, has every advantage over its enemy. It can never be obliged to fight without the greatest probability of success; and whenever militias fail in defending their country, there will be more reason to impute blame to the unskilfulness of their generals than to the cowardice of the men. The greatest military exploits recorded in history; namely, those of Marathon, Thermopylæ, Platæa, Morgarten, Sempach, Wefen, Cressy †,

* Any one who has read with attention the justly celebrated history of the decline and fall of the Roman empire, will feel the full force of this observation.

† The whole of Edward the Third's army, at the battle of Cressy, were new levied troops. Hume's Hist. vol. ii. 6—15. ann. 1346. And with similar forces, Henry the Eighth, at the famous battle of Guinegate or Spurs, defeated the army of France, tho' the officers were excellent and the soldiers had been long trained in the Italian wars. Vide Rapin's Hist. Vol. i. b. 15. Machiavel's discourses. L. i. c. 21.

Poictiers, and Agincourt, were performed not by standing armies, but by well trained militias, and the boasted Prussian army itself principally consists of a well disciplined militia, embodied for two or three months every year, and then dispersed to their usual labours and occupations*.

The great requisites of a soldier, are courage, discipline and ready obedience, and these qualifications may be found in a well regulated militia, nearly in as great perfection as in a standing army. As to personal courage, it is either founded on natural constitution, on the hopes of honour and reward, and the fear of disgrace and punishment, or sometimes on a contempt of danger founded on the remembrance of past dangers which have been escaped with safety. It is this last species of courage only, which belongs peculiarly to a veteran army; for the rest may be found in a militia. But no kind of valour has been attended with such astonishing effects, as that enthusiasm of the mind which naturally arises from a near connexion with the event. If personal interest is at stake, a man neither listens to his fear, nor to his reason. When he fights in defence of every thing that is dear and valuable, if his arms are suited to the purpose, and his efforts are well conducted he must be successful†.

* Vide Moore's Travels. Vol. 2. p. 209.

† In general some instances of barbarity, either real or fictitious, or perhaps exaggerated, excite the rage and spirit
C of

By discipline, I mean a thorough knowledge of the use of the instruments of war, and the exercises of a soldier. For, like other trades, the military one has its craft, pretending that discipline cannot be acquired without long practice and experience, though innumerable instances prove that the most important parts of military exercise may be very speedily learned under proper direction. The articles of discipline most essential for a soldier, according to Machiavel, are, to be inured to labour and hardships, which renders a man active and hardy; to be taught how to handle and make use of arms; and how to keep his station in the battalion he belongs to, without disorder or confusion.*

As to the first article, it is certain that the soldiers of a well regulated militia are more accustomed to labour, than any individual in the army; for the former is in the constant habit of maintaining himself by his own toil, whereas the regular soldier lives in idleness, supported by the industry of others. In this respect, therefore, a militia seems to have a great advantage over a standing army.

With regard to the manual exercise of the firelock, a sufficient knowledge of it is far from being

of the invaded to such a pitch, that nothing but the want of proper arms and skilful generals hinder their destroying the enemy.

* Machiavel's Art of War, l. 2. c. 6.

difficult to acquire. A recruit, without being in the least acquainted with arms, may, to use a technical phrase, be thoroughly drilled in a month's time. By experience he may use his weapons with more seeming dexterity, but not in a manner more destructive. That sleight of hand, which is all his additional acquisition, is of no real service to him in action; for in battle, there is no time for juggling*.

As to the third article of military discipline, a militia must be inferior in that particular to a standing army; yet before an island, like Great-Britain, could be invaded by a powerful armament, there would be time sufficient to acquire it: and though it might be difficult to make a militia alert in all the little punctilios of a review, yet they may soon be made as fit for real action as any regular troops whatever, which have never before been in the field.

In a ready and implicit obedience to orders also, a militia is in general reckoned inferior to a standing army; but to this it may be answered, that a well regulated militia has its officers com-

* Well disciplined battalions are taught to fire at once, so as to make but one report. This may do at a review to please the populace, who judge of soldiers as they do of musicians, *by the ear*; but it is of no use in an engagement. Nay, it prevents the soldiers from taking an aim, or levelling their pieces according to the nature of the ground which they, and the enemy stand on.

posed of those who have influence and authority over their soldiers in time of peace, as well as in the field. Whenever that is the case, they are not inferior to standing armies, even in the article of obedience; and it is in general more perfect as it arises from respect and affection more than from fear of punishment. Besides, if it were allowed that militias, particularly when ill-regulated, are inferior to standing armies in the article of obedience, yet it may be observed in their favour, that by practice and experience that disadvantage is overcome, and that a few months of uninterrupted exercise in the field, will render them in every respect equal to regular forces. This proves, that under an able general, and by skilful management, they are fully equal to the defence of a nation. If the country be extensive, its conquest can never be effected in a short space of time, nor until the greatest part of the people may have become expert soldiers.

But whatever militias might be made by proper regulations, there is no reason to wonder that in general they are reckoned insufficient for national defence, when we consider how little they are in general attended to, and how ill they are regulated. Their arms, their ammunition and other warlike necessaries are most commonly inferior to those of standing armies. The article of arms is of the first importance to a soldier; for if by their means he is able to destroy great numbers of the enemy,

all

all their skill and courage will not stand them in any stead*.

Nor would militias betray the trust reposed in them, if they were more depended on. But when standing armies are told, that every thing depends upon their valour, whilst the exertions of a militia are held forth to public ridicule and contempt, what can be expected from the latter? Indeed as perpetual forces are favourable to the power of kings, and consequently adverse to the liberties of the subject, it is not improbable that militias are purposely neglected and ridiculed in order to render mercenary troops more necessary and less odious. In the words of a celebrated historian, it has long been the chief object of royal policy to increase and support standing armies. And the great aim of princes and ministers to discredit or annihilate every other means of national activity or defence †.

There are five methods by which European nations have hitherto protected themselves from invasion and conquest ‡; standing armies, foreign

* The success of the Romans with more justice may be imputed to their superiority in the nature of their arms, than in valour or discipline. In courage and discipline the Greeks and Macedonians were fully equal to the Romans, but the arms of the latter both offensive and defensive, were in many respects preferable, and hence their superiority proceeded.

† Robertson's Hist. of Charles the Vth. Vol. I. p. 95.

‡ In Asia, nations endeavour to provide for their security by establishing feudatory princes in the distant provinces,

auxiliaries, fortifications, a navy, and a militia; and of these the last on many accounts is entitled to a preference for the purpose of internal defence.

As to standing armies, it has been already observed, that they are but a very uncertain security against foreign invasions. When regular forces alone are depended upon, whatever they may be as to courage and resolution, the rest of the nation must be unwarlike. If by any accident therefore the standing army is defeated, there is no resource, but in submission: for disorderly multitudes unskilful in the art of war, can never defend their possessions against the efforts of a bold and enterprizing enemy. Whereas, when every man is trained to be a soldier, the fate of an empire can never depend upon the issue of a single engagement. This, Hannibal fatally experienced, when he attempted the conquest of Italy; army after army he defeated, but new ones succeeded. As long as every Roman was trained to arms, Rome remained invincible.

Foreign auxiliaries we know by experience in this island, is a mode of defence still more dangerous, and more expensive, and at the same time less to be depended upon. According to Sidney, they want either fidelity, or courage, and sometimes both. If they are not corrupted or beat by the
vices, or by desolating their frontiers. But European
Empires are too confined for such modes of defence.

invader, they make a prey of their masters. Gain and not right is their object, and their maxim,

“ *Ibi fas, ubi maxima merces*”*

The very nature of an island prevents the necessity of paying much attention to fortifications: we seem however in this respect to have paid too implicit an obedience to the advice of Buchannan; for if the towns upon the sea coast were fortified, it would undoubtedly tend to intimidate our enemies from attempting an invasion †.

Fleets are moving forts, and tho’ I wish not to undervalue that bulwark of the trade and commerce of Great Britain, yet it must be observed that they are far from being that sure source of internal protection which has been so frequently inculcated.

For in the first place, fleets, at least useful ones, must entirely depend upon commerce. Without trade, all the efforts of despotism cannot rear up a formidable navy. But how uncertain and variable a thing commerce is, ancient as well as modern history informs us, and naval strength must be equally precarious.

* Sidney’s political discourses, c. 2. sect. 23. Vide also Harrington, p. 99. 184. 277. and 453.

† Buchannan’s advice was, “ *Nec fossa, & muris patriam, sed Marte tueri.*” Though it were to be wished since we decline trusting to walls and ditches, that our arms were under better regulation.

Secondly, the materials of which ships are composed are of a short lived and perishable nature, requiring continual repair and uninterrupted attention. If therefore there are any pauses of attention, or even a temporary neglect, your boasted fleet will very soon be annihilated, and dwindle away of itself.

Thirdly, there is no kind of defence which in general is so perfectly destroyed by an enemy, or which it is so difficult to recover. One fortified town may be taken, and yet the others are not weakened. An army may be cut off, but in time men may be disciplined to supply their place. But so difficult is it to repair the loss both of ships and of seamen, that if a fleet is ruined, either by a superior force, or by accident, years will not replace it.

Fourthly, fleets are more liable to destruction from the elements than any other species of defence. To the baneful effects of earth, air, fire, and water, they are almost equally exposed. A defence depending upon any element is far from being a certain one; but when it is subjected to more than one, nay, to all the elements, it must indeed be precarious.

Lastly, even a superiority at sea, joined to all the vigilance imaginable, will not always prevent an invasion; of this, many instances might be collected

lected from history*. In fact, the operations by sea cannot be so mechanically and deliberately conducted as those by land: the winds and tides may lock up one squadron, and fill the sails of another; or a tempest may disperse or perhaps destroy the British fleet, whilst the squadrons of their enemies are secured in their harbours, or forwarded by the storm.

Some, indeed, have endeavoured to set forth the idea of an invasion from France, as in itself impracticable and ridiculous; as a feint to excite our fears, to hurt our credit, and by detaining our forces at home to weaken our foreign exertions. But in this case it is dangerous to trust too much to plausible theories, at least it is better to be deceived a thousand times over by false alarms, than to be taken once unprepared.

The invaders of every country must have three things in view. First, how to get into the enemy's territories; secondly, what opposition they

* Our ablest admirals have confessed, that a superiority at sea was only a precarious defence. The Carthaginians found so; for with it, they could neither prevent Claudius from getting into Sicily, nor Agathocles into Africa. An. Un. Hist. Vol. 17, p. 443. The revolution itself is an instance how little a fleet is to be depended upon. For if the English fleet had not been prevented by contrary winds from getting up with the Dutch one, that glorious enterprise would have been defeated. By that accident we then recovered our liberties, but if we should ever resolve to trust entirely to our fleet, the same accident may hereafter be the cause of our losing them.

will meet with there; thirdly, in the event of misfortunes, a safe retreat.

As to the first particular, it is surely unfavourable to the invaders of an island. To transport a great army by sea requires an inconceivable number both of ships and seamen*; the transports with the troops may be intercepted by the vigilance, and sometimes by the good fortune of their foes, and the invading forces destroyed on an element, where they could not expect to conquer. In their passage they may meet with storms sufficient to destroy them without the interference of a visible enemy. Or the landing in a hostile country, unless the place is very well chosen, and no opposition of any consequence given, may be found to be a very dangerous and hazardous undertaking.

But if we suppose the enemy fairly landed in England with a powerful army, unless a well-regulated militia was established, I should tremble for the event. Though our forces were as numerous as we have heard them lately represented†, yet dispersed, as they are, from one extremity of the

* William the Conqueror found it necessary to collect no less than 3000 vessels, great and small, for his invasion of England. Hume's Hist. Vol. 1. C. 3.

† They are generally supposed to be about 60,000 effective men, tho', perhaps, more numerous upon paper. But I question much whether 30,000 could be collected together in a month's time to act against the enemy.

island to another, we should find it impossible, in a short space of time, to collect a force strong enough to cope with the enemy, and to defend the capital, on whose safety this nation so much depends. Besides, the country is open, and we trust so much to our insular situation as to have few fortifications capable of any considerable resistance.

It is true, in case of misfortunes, that an enemy without a great naval superiority could have little chance of escaping out of Britain; but this would never damp the confidence of a numerous army, trusting to its numbers, and flushed with the prospect of plunder; nor would the dread of it prevent their risking an invasion; and if they once landed, this danger would only serve to render them desperate, and consequently more courageous. For the meekest cowards have fought bravely, when impelled by despair*.

* The English are never weaker, nor easier overcome than in their own country. Not for the reason assigned by Montesquieu, Spirit of Laws, l. 9, c. 8. namely, their divisions at home; but from the despair of the invader, who must conquer or perish. This idea is confirmed by the arguments made use of by William the Conqueror to encourage his forces prior to the famous battle of Hastings: "Inevitable destruction, says he, must be the consequence of your discomfiture. An enraged enemy hangs upon your rear, *the sea prevents your retreat*, and an ignominious death must be the certain punishment of your imprudence and cowardice." Hume's Hist. Vol. 1. C 3.

That an invasion therefore, is neither impracticable nor (in our present situation at least) incapable of success, no reasonable man can deny; and for our defence against it, a well regulated militia is the only system to be approved of; the only proper source of national confidence. Other modes are either dangerous or uncertain; that alone, sure, uniform, and invariable. I wish it had fallen to the lot of some abler hand to have sketched out the plan of such a militia, suited to the present circumstances of Great Britain. 'Till such a man arises, more humble abilities must attempt it, and however ready I may be to acknowledge myself inferior to others in that particular, yet in zeal and attachment to the service of the public, I will yield to none.

C H A P. II.

Of the proper System of Military Defence, for the Safety and Protection of Great Britain.

EVERY plan for a public nature must be varied according to the peculiar circumstances of that nation for which it is intended; for a military system well adapted to an inland country like Poland, or a mountainous one like Switzerland, may in some respects be but ill-suited to a maritime power, and an insular situation. It is therefore in the first place necessary to examine, what are the peculiar circumstances of this island.

It must strike any one who seriously considers this subject, that the many distant and valuable territories possessed by Great Britain cannot well be defended without the assistance of regular forces. If Britain were, like Switzerland, without such distant acquisitions, like it, I am persuaded, it might defend itself by a militia only. But when these possessions are taken into consideration, the firmest friends to a militia must acknowledge, that some regular forces are necessary: and still more necessary, if the distant settlements of our enemies were to be attacked. For no troops are so fit for being employed in such a service, as those that

are

are acquainted with the smallest minutiae of discipline, and, if possible, have been formerly inured to the field. Besides the troops necessary for defending our own settlements abroad, ten thousand foot, and five thousand horse, ought therefore to be always kept in England, and if any part of them are sent away, immediately replaced by new raised troops, ready to be sent to any quarter of the globe, where the interests of Great Britain may require it, and kept up for any sudden emergency, when the operation of a militia might be found too slow and tedious.

It may in the next place be observed, that in time of war some force ought always to be in arms to defend our shipping and dockyards, and to be encamped for the protection of the capital. Hence it is necessary to have a body of men on the footing of the present militia in England, but to which the name of fencibles, or provincial corps, may be given; which in time of peace may be fully disciplined by being exercised not only every Sunday, but may be kept a month every year in the field; and in time of war, like standing forces, perpetually in arms.

But as the defence of the whole kingdom, when a proper militia is established, will neither depend upon regular, nor fencible, or provincial troops; a body of thirty thousand men, both from England and Scotland, would be as many fencibles

as would be necessary : twenty-four thousand of which ought to be raised in England, and six thousand in Scotland. Thus in time of war, an army consisting of forty thousand foot and five thousand horse, would be perpetually in arms to assist a well regulated militia in protecting Britain in general, its coast and its capital. Surely then, there would be little room for apprehension.

Further, it ought to be considered, that men are at present permitted to serve in the militia by substitutes ; a regulation which ought to be imitated, if fencible troops were established in their room. For to many men whose subsistence, and that of their families, depends upon their personal attention to their business, abstracting them for a month in time of peace, and still more during the whole year in time of war, might with some reason be complained of. This indulgence, too many whose lot it has been to serve in the militia have taken the benefit of ; and hence the soldiers of the present militia of England, instead of being men of substance, and of course possessing an interest in the state abstracted from their situation as soldiers, consist of the lowest and idlest fellows in the kingdom. Brave they are, for that is the characteristic of Britons, and without doubt so far as their number could effect, would valiantly repel any foreign invader ; but how far they might be
brought

brought (notwithstanding patriotic officers) to support any domestick attack upon the liberties of the country, is at best a disagreeable uncertainty. Without considering therefore how necessary it is to have a real militia established, as our best defence against foreign enemies, it seems also necessary to have a number of armed and well-disciplined men in the kingdom: not in actual service, to make head against those who are in service, if they should ever attempt to encroach upon the liberties of the nation. If regular forces therefore are necessary to attack our enemies abroad, and to protect our distant possessions. If fencible or provincial troops ought to be established to guard our capital, and our towns the most exposed to the insults of the enemy: a well regulated militia is fully as necessary, not only to render these kingdoms unconquerable by foreign enemies, but also to defend the property and the privileges of the people in general from domestic invasions*.

Militias, like standing armies (except in a mountainous country like Switzerland) ought to con-

* The very establishing a proper militia would prevent any attack upon our liberties. For a probability of success (it has been well observed) is one of the greatest incitements to villainy, as the contrary is the best preservative of innocence.

first both of horse and foot. Indeed a numerous cavalry is the most proper defence for an open country like England, where by quick marches it may harass an enemy every step of their march. Hence the Duke of Marlborough affirmed, in the event of an invasion, that the safety of England, would very much depend upon the multitude of its horsemen.

If both horse and foot therefore ought to be levied; to me, it appears evident, that the first should be raised in the towns, and the second in the country, so as to prevent the attention of the same people from being distracted by two different services. Besides, the inhabitants of the country, are much fitter than citizens for being foot soldiers, being more inured to labour, less vitiated by drink and debauchery, and abler to endure the toils and difficulties of a martial life. As the most opulent also live in towns, they are better able to afford horses proper for war, and in general they have them so well broke, that little additional training would be necessary to fit them for the field; whereas it would be impossible to keep up a number of people sufficient to train the innumerable multitude of wild and ungovernable horses scattered through the country. Two observations may be added. First, it might be dangerous to trust every inhabitant in a populous town

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with arms, particularly one so full of people as London is, as it might endanger the peace and quiet of the nation. For the licentious inhabitants of cities are more inclined to mutiny and cabal, and may be more easily collected for seditious purposes, than the undebauched and scattered inhabitants of the country. Secondly, the citizens when disciplined as a body of horse, would check with greater facility such rebellious commotions as those of Cade and Tyler, than if trained to the exercise adapted to infantry only, and the terror of being opposed by a numerous cavalry would probably altogether prevent such insurrections. A militia thus separately and distinctly disciplined, could never be excited by factious men to make use of their arms in conjunction for the disturbance of the public peace*. When disjoined, as would probably be the case in domestic disorders, their force would be defective and imperfect. When united, as might always be expected against a foreign enemy, it would be found invincible. On these principles the following outlines

* In Turkey the spahies and janizaries, or horse and foot guards, are poised and balanced against each other. And Lord Lyttleton observes, vol. 3. p. 92, even prior to the reign of Stephen, that the popular militia from reasons of policy was opposed to the aristocratical, and the forces of the towns, made a check upon those of the barons.

of a plan for the establishment of a constitutional militia are founded †.

PROPOSITION I.

In the first place it is proposed that in every town whose inhabitants exceed 5000 in number, (sea-port towns excepted,) a militia of cavalry shall be established, and that every inhabitant who actually keeps a horse or is able to maintain one, shall be obliged to enter himself into the militia of that city, and to serve on horseback, either by himself or a substitute. The same to be considered as the militia of that town, and never to be marched by the commanding officer, above ten miles therefrom, without an order from the magistrates, nor above fifteen, without an order from the crown.

As the whole body of the inhabitants are not exercised, and substitutes are allowed in oppidal militias, none who are able to afford it, ought to be exempted (except they have served for ten years in the militia) nor any disqualified but such

† For some particular articles in the following plan, and indeed for some of the preliminary observations to it, the author is indebted to an ingenious system of the same nature, published anno 1745, which however plausible in theory was found too intricate for practice. But that plan itself is not entirely original, for in many respects it imitates the system laid down by that great master of politics, Harrington.

as refuse to take the usual oaths of supremacy and abjuration.

In towns, whose inhabitants amount to less than 5000 people, no cavalry of any consequence could be raised; consequently a militia of infantry ought to be established.

PROPOSITION II.

That the militia of every town should be divided into two branches; light horse and dragoons. The first to be formed of all such as are possessed of 200*l.* per annum, or 4,000*l.* in money. The second of such as are not qualified to enrol with them; as inferior citizens, substitutes and the like, who may be mounted on horses used in carriages, which are generally of a proper size for heavy cavalry, and may easily be trained as dragoons.

To form a militia of light horse of such as have the greatest property in the cities, where cavalry is established, can be no great increase of expence to people of that rank, because all such keep horses for health, conveniency or shew, which with a little attention to size, colour and training will answer all military purposes. A uniformity in dress, accoutrements, and colour of horses, ought also to be attended to; (but the minute particu-

lars may be left to the taste and fancy of the officers) for such circumstances, tho' in themselves trifling, give a more respectable appearance to any body of troops, make their enemies entertain a higher notion of them, and give more confidence to their friends. Their arms, in which an exact uniformity must be observed, ought to be furnished at the public expence.

PROPOSITION III.

That in every county where a militia of cavalry is established, a grand major shall be appointed by the crown, with a salary from the public, as is the case in Switzerland, upon whose requisition the magistrate of every town, where such a militia is to be raised, shall make out a list of all such as ought to serve therein, which list shall be transmitted to the secretary of war, and in proportion to the numbers therein contained, colonels, majors, captains, and other inferior officers, shall be appointed, by a royal commission, from among the people of the greatest property in the district; the captains of the same, and superior officers being entitled by such commission to the dignity of knights.

Five thousand light horse, and fifteen thousand heavy cavalry would surely be a sufficient defence
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in so far as horse is necessary for these kingdoms. And as many more will be inrolled, a proportional deduction may be made, according to the number that ought to be furnished by the different towns.

PROPOSITION IV.

That the grand major of the county shall appoint in every town a commissioner of arms, who shall have a salary also from the public, whose duty it is to have the horses trained, and the whole cavalry under his charge properly exercised, every Sunday, after public worship is over. The same being reviewed by the grand major of the county, once every two months, who shall report their state and progress in discipline to the secretary of war; which reports, on certain fixed days, shall be brought under the consideration of both houses of parliament.

PROPOSITION V.

That in every parish where no militia of cavalry is established, particularly in the parishes of sea-port towns which are most exposed to invasion, the officiating clergyman and church-wardens, upon an order and requisition from the lord lieutenant of the county,

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ty, shall transmit to him a list of all persons from eighteen to fifty, capable of bearing arms, in proportion to whose numbers, captains and other officers shall be appointed by the lord lieutenant from among such as reside in the parish, and have the most considerable property therein; which militia shall never be obliged to march out of the parish, without an order from the lord lieutenant, nor out of the county without an order from the crown.

As no substitutes are allowed in the infantry militia, persons coming under the following description ought to be exempted: the clergy, peers, and members of parliament; the judges, officers of the household, treasury, exchequer; admiralty and navy boards; all counsellors at law, &c. during the terms and assizes; physicians, surgeons, and the like; and such as are incapacitated by age or bodily infirmities.

PROPOSITION VI.

That the commanding officer, or senior captain in every parish, shall appoint a parish corporal, who has been in the army, and is well acquainted with military discipline, who shall have a salary also from the public, and the charge of the parochial arms and ammunition

nition given him, and whose duty it shall be to train the militia of the parish, every Sunday, in the usual exercises of the foot.

PROPOSITION VII.

That the lord lieutenant shall have the command of the infantry militia in the county, with the power of nominating the field officers in the respective hundreds, who shall assemble the regimented militia of the hundred for three days in time of peace, and six days in time of war, to be exercised together, and in the event of any imminent danger of an invasion from abroad, may encamp them for a fortnight in the month of May or June, to render their discipline more complete, during which periods they shall receive pay from the public. Their progress in discipline to be from time to time reported by the lord lieutenant to the secretary at war, for parliamentary discussion, which must prevent such a system falling into decay, unless every spark of British patriotism should be extinguished.

The infantry militia ought to be divided into two classes; the first, consisting of the unmarried; the second, of all the married men in the district. The first, or unmarried class, ought to be regimented, and always ready to march upon the
shortest

shortest notice. The second class ought never to be drawn from home, except in the event of an actual invasion, or imminent danger of it.

PROPOSITION VIII.

That military discipline shall only be enforced in such a militia by pecuniary fines or personal confinement. The parochial officers may constitute a court martial, and fine to the amount of five pounds, or imprison for five days. If a greater punishment is thought necessary for the offence, a court martial of the hundred may be appointed for trying the offender, whose powers, as also those of op-pidal courts martial, shall extend to two months imprisonment, and twenty pounds of fine. Such as behave well ought to be gratified by some pecuniary reward, or conspicuous mark of distinction.

PROPOSITION IX.

That those who neglect or refuse to obey the regulations enacted for the establishment of a national militia, shall be punished as follows: first, if the lord lieutenant of any county, the magistrates of any town, or the ministers and church-wardens of any parish shall neglect or refuse to carry the above re-

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gulations,

gulations, in so far as depends upon them, into execution, they shall forfeit their respective offices and employments, and new ones may be chosen or appointed. Secondly, for the punishment of other offenders, the following fines and penalties are proposed :

TABLE of MILITARY FINES and TAXES.

Tax per annum on such as refuse the oaths of supremacy or allegiance, or have neglected to enter themselves into the light horse after being legally inrolled	-	-	-	<i>l.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
				25	0	0
Ditto, if in the dragoons,	-	-	-	10	10	0
Ditto, if in the infantry,	-	-	-	5	5	0
Fine to be paid by the field-officers of the cavalry, if they refuse to act,	-			30	0	0
Ditto, if in the infantry,	-	-	-	25	0	0
Ditto, if captains in the cavalry,	-	-		20	0	0
Ditto, if captains in the infantry,	-			15	15	0
Ditto, if subalterns in the cavalry,	-			12	12	0
Ditto, if subalterns in the infantry,	-			8	8	0

Other fines for deserting the service without cause, &c. to depend upon the parochial and opidal courts martial, consisting of all the officers of the respective districts. Such fines to be levied on the goods and chattels of the delinquents, by a warrant from the commanding officer in the
city

city or parish, signed by two of his Majesty's justices of the peace, and put into execution by such constable or other petty officer as they may direct it to. Such fines, after deducting one shilling per pound for his trouble, shall be paid by the constable to the commanding officer who granted the warrant, for which he shall be accountable. The sums levied by fines and taxes in the first place to be applied for paying the general expences of the militia, and the balance to be at the disposal of the respective courts martial in whose district they are raised, and to be expended in providing drums, butts for shooting at, and other military purposes.

PROPOSITION. X.

That in every town where a militia of cavalry is established, as also in sea-port towns, a certain body of men, in proportion to the number of its inhabitants, shall be taught all the arts of engineering by firing of cannons and mortars, at butts erected for that special purpose; the ammunition, &c. to be provided at the public expence.

On two accounts, the artillery ought to be confined to towns; first, to accustom the cavalry to the noise of cannon, which would render the horse fitter for real action; and secondly, to be a farther

ther check upon the militia of the country, who could never expect to be successful in any seditious insurrection, if opposed both by horse and artillery, and without having either to support them.

In these ten propositions, the general outline of the plan is comprised. Many additional regulations might be suggested, but it seems unnecessary to enter into the more minute particulars, unless the general system is approved of.

On the system of national defence above proposed, it may in the first place be remarked, that if it were carried into execution, no foreign power could ever subjugate Great Britain unless we were dis-united at home, or unless Providence interfered in behalf of our enemies. We should in that case in time of war, have a standing force of 40,000 foot and 5000 horse, and a militia at least amounting to 600,000 infantry, and 20,000 cavalry*, a force sufficient to subdue the world, instead of being only fit to defend such an inconsiderable part of it.

Besides, such a defence whilst it was more secure, would also prove much less expensive than the present system. By it, the pay of some part of the

* In the year 1583, there was a general review made of all the men in England capable of bearing arms, and they were found to amount to about 1,200,000. Hume's Hist. appendix to chap. 50. Both in England and Scotland then; 600,000 infantry may be reckoned upon at this time (exclusive of towns) even in the country.

militia on the present system, and of many regiments of regular forces would be saved to the public. Instead of which, if the arms were once provided, scarcely any additional expence would be necessary. For the grand majors, the commissioners of arms, and the parish corporals, would save the half-pay list, and the revenues of Chelsea Hospital; and the fines and taxes above proposed would probably raise a sum equal to any farther expence, without encroaching upon the public revenue. But supposing that the expence of a general militia amounted to 200,000*l.* per annum; how trifling will it appear, in comparison of the enormous sums at present lavished for the national protection.

Nor can any plan of a general military establishment be contrived less destructive to industry. The people are exercised on that day of the week only, when they must be idle, nay, in towns where manufactures are established, none but the opulent are trained to arms; so that a slothful spirit will never be excited among the industrious part of the nation: at any rate to spend a part of every Sunday in military exercises cannot have a worse effect upon the industry of a mechanic, than spending the whole of it, as is too frequently the case at present, in idleness and debauchery*.

* The late alderman Beckford observed in the lower house, that a part of every Sunday would be much better spent

Such a military system also must prove highly favourable to liberty; first, by diminishing the numbers or at least removing the necessity of a great standing army; and, secondly, by putting the sword (where it ought to be) in the hands of the people, without which, no limitation of monarchy can give any real security to the privileges of subjects. Indeed when the people are unarmed and undisciplined they may with impunity be oppressed by the king, supported by a standing army. Resistance (with the army against them); only serves to rivet their chains, or to hasten on the sad hour of despotism; nor can any nation pretend to be free, when the only men in arms are under the sole command and consequently at the devotion of the crown. He who wields the sword of the state, must have its purse at his mercy: and Charles the First might impute his want of success to this, that he attempted to open the one, before he had grasped the other.

Moreover, such a militia will not be deficient in valor. In fact, men in northern climates, (particularly where the government is a free one) are naturally brave, and the great art of despotism is to subdue their natural courage, and to render

spent in learning to defend one's country, than in sitting at the alehouse, or sauntering in the fields, as most of the common people do at present. Lord Talbot supported similar sentiments in the upper assembly.

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them timid and fearful. God forbid that such baneful arts should ever prove successful in Britain.

Nor would such a militia be in any way defective in the essential article of discipline. For a knowledge of military exercises sufficient for national defence is far from being so difficult to acquire as is generally imagined. Nor does it require any extraordinary exertions in the sovereign, to preserve or to excite a martial spirit almost in any nation*. To their officers likewise, all due obedience may be expected: they are once a week under the military command of those, who are the most opulent and respectable people in the district, and consequently must enjoy a considerable share of civil influence and authority over them. Nay, such a militia must be more inclined to obey their commanders, than the soldiers of a standing army, whose officers are frequently changing their corps, and varying their ranks, and also frequently absent from their respective regiments for a considerable length of time.

It would likewise be of the utmost consequence to have such a plan carried into execution, if it

* So strong is the natural propensity of men towards military shows and exercises, that little attention in the sovereign is sufficient to excite and support a martial spirit in a nation: at least the English found so, when under the dominion of that pacific monarch James the First. Hume's Hist. of England, appendix to chap. 50.

were only for the sake of establishing a system of subordination and order in the event of an invasion. Without order, says the gallant Sidney, no numbers of men, however valiant, are able to defend themselves. Their multitude breeds confusion.—Their wealth, when it is like to be made a prey of, increases the fears of the owners, and the spirits of the enemy. And they, who, if they were brought into good order, might conquer a great part of the world, (being destitute of that advantage), dare not think of defending themselves.

Lastly, such a plan might be carried into execution with but very little difficulty, and with little additional loss of time, or inconvenience to individuals, than that to which they are at present subjected. In times of such public danger, every one would most assuredly exert himself. If Grand Majors were appointed, skilful in military affairs, the cavalry would soon be brought into some kind of order, and fit for many essential purposes in the event of an invasion. If an inhabitant of every parish in England, now in the militia, were dismissed, there would be abundance of parish corporals to train the infantry, and active Lord Lieutenants would soon effect their being fully disciplined. Nay in case of imminent danger, they might be exercised oftener than once a-week. To conclude, in the words of a spirited
anonymous

anonymous writer, if to free our country from the continual dread of invasion; to lessen the necessity of maintaining large standing armies in time of peace, or relying on troops raw, and perfectly undisciplined on the emerging of a war, if to revive that ancient military spirit, formerly so prevalent in the nation; and to train ourselves to the exercises of war, for the defence of our country; if these are objects of any national importance, it becomes every individual, actuated by the least spark of patriotism, to exert his utmost influence to procure the establishment of such a militia, as may be found the most likely to effectuate such great and important purposes.

C H A P. III.

Observations on the Plan lately proposed for arming the Towns, with some Thoughts on the Propriety of exercising the Militia on Sunday.

THE plan lately proposed by one of his Majesty's principal Secretary's of State, having occasioned much speculation, it may not be improper to make a few short observations upon it, and in particular upon the regulation it proposes, of exercising the militia on the Sabbath-day. The plan to which I allude, as submitted to the consideration of the public, was conceived in the following terms :

HEADS of a PLAN for raising Corps in several principal Towns in Great-Britain.

1st. The principal towns in Great-Britain to furnish one or more battalions each, or a certain number of companies each, in proportion to their size and number of inhabitants.

2d. The officers to be appointed from among the gentlemen of the neighbourhood, or the inhabitants of the said towns, either by commission from his Majesty, or from the Lord Lieutenant of the county, upon the recommendation of the
chief

chief magistrate of the town in which the corps are raised.

3d. They are to be possessed of some certain estate in land or money, in proportion to their rank:

4th. An adjutant or town major in each town to be appointed by his Majesty.

5th. A proper number of serjeants and corporals from the army to be appointed for the corps in each town, in proportion to their numbers.

6th. The said serjeants and corporals, as well as the adjutant, or town major, to be in the government pay.

7th. The men to exercise frequently, either in battalions, or by companies, on Sundays, and on all holidays, and also after their work is over in the evenings.

8th. Arms, accoutrements, and ammunition, to be furnished at the expence of government, if required.

9th. Proper magazines, or storehouses, to be chosen, or erected in each town, for keeping the said arms, &c.

10th. The arms and accoutrements to be delivered out at times of exercise only, and to be returned into the storehouses as soon as the exercise is finished.

11th. The adjutant, or town major, to be always present at exercise, and to see that the men

afterwards march regularly, and lodge their arms in the storehouses.

12th. Proper penalties to be inflicted on such as absent themselves from exercise, as also for disobedience of orders, insolence to their officers, and other disorderly behaviour.

13th. The above corps not to be obliged, on any account, or by any authority whatever to move from their respective towns, except in time of actual invasion or rebellion.

14th. His Majesty shall then have power to order the said corps to march to any part of Great-Britain, as his service may require.

15th. They are on such occasions to act either separately, or in conjunction with his Majesty's regular forces, and be under the command of such general officers as his Majesty shall think proper to appoint.

16th. Both officers and men to receive full pay as his Majesty's other regiments of foot, from the day of their march, and as long as they shall continue on service out of their towns.

17th. They are to be subject to military discipline, in the same manner as his Majesty's regular forces, during the said time of their being so called out, and receiving government's pay.

18. All officers who should be disabled in actual service to be entitled to half pay, and all
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non-commissioned officers and private men disabled, to receive the benefit of Chelsea hospital.

19th. The widows of officers killed in the service to have a pension for life*.

* These propositions were accompanied with the following letter, which does infinite honour to the patriotism and public spirit of the noble lord, by whom it is subscribed.

Whitehall, 7th of May, 1782.

C I R C U L A R C O P Y.

S I R,

His Majesty has commanded me to express his firm reliance upon the spirit and loyalty of his people, and his royal confidence, that, during this season of difficulty, their utmost endeavours will not be wanting to give unquestionable proofs of their attachment and emulation for his service; and foreseeing, that by wise, strenuous, and timely preparations, he may not only disappoint, or defeat any hostile attempts, but, by appearing strong and united at home, he may be enabled to make the more powerful efforts for maintaining his honour and the public interests abroad, and thereby lay the surest foundations for a safe, an honorable, and a lasting peace; and as the populousness of the principal towns and cities of Great-Britain, naturally offers the greatest facility, as well for forming into corps, as for learning the military exercise, without loss of time, interruption of labour, or any considerable fatigue, His Majesty has commanded me to transmit to you the enclosed proposition, which has been submitted to His Majesty, as at least a temporary plan for augmenting the domestic force of the nation, which being adopted or improved, according to the circumstances and situation of the town, of which you are the chief magistrate, may tend to the immediate formation of a great and respectable addition to the national force at home, on the most natural and constitutional principles.

For

This plan, at least as a general system of national defence, seems to be defective; in the first place as containing no provision for the establishment of a militia of cavalry, without which this island cannot be safe from the invasions of its enemies. Enough has been said in the preceding chapter on the necessity of having a large body of horse, and of the propriety of raising them in the towns; and the London Horse Association fully proves what might be done in the capital, if that spirit were properly encouraged*.

The noble Lord's system in the next place is exceptionable, on account of its proposing to arm the towns, whilst it leaves the inhabitants of the country, who are much better calculated to act as

For this purpose, I have His Majesty's commands to signify to you his desire and recommendation, that you should take the same into immediate consideration, and, after having considered, report to me whatever observations may occur to you for the carrying into execution a plan, the purpose of which is to give security to your own persons and property, and to the general defence of the kingdom.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient

Humble servant,

SHELBURNE.

(Signed)

* It has often occurred to me, that the races of Newmarket, and other places in the kingdom, might be converted to beneficial military purposes; by obliging every person who attends such meetings, to have a horse trained; either for the light horse or the dragoons, and to be exercised during the race week. Thus what is at present a misfortune to the country, might become an addition to its security, and to its strength.

soldiers,

foldiers, in a manner unarmed and defenceless. Not to mention that arming the country cannot prove fatal to industry, whereas it will be very difficult to make the same individual an active soldier and an industrious mechanic†.

Besides, without entering into more minute objections‡, it may be remarked, that arming any large body of people, who live contiguous to each other, is at best a dangerous experiment, and would probably be repented of, if the people thought they had any reason to be dissatisfied with their rulers, on account of any partial stagnation of trade, or any temporary scarcity of provisions, and still more if their passions were enflamed, by the envenomed harangues of any popular demagogue.

Lastly, it appears to me that the inhabitants of the country might be fully as well trained to the

† It is well known how much the two warlike nations of Rome and Sparta, despised the military assistance of artificers.

‡ The second proposition, by which the officers of the different corps are to be recommended by the chief magistrate of the town in which the corps is raised, from among the gentlemen of the neighbourhood, seems to place the magistrate of the towns in a rank superior to the gentlemen of the country. The 14th proposition also appears to be exceptionable; for in the event of an actual invasion the people would voluntarily turn out: and he who has not spirit enough to march, of his own accord, when an enemy has landed, had much better be left at home.

exerciſes of war on Sundays and other holidays, as the citizens of towns; and that if they are regularly aſſembled once a week, it is as frequent an intercourse with each other, and perhaps in as large a body as ought to be permitted to the ſoldiers of any militia, not ſtrictly diſciplined. This leads me, however, to juſtify the ſyſtem of training a militia on the Sabbath-day, on the propriety of which the deciſion of any controverſy on this ſubject, muſt in a great measure depend.

Among the Jews, from whom that wiſe inſtitution was taken, the Sabbath was far from being ſtrictly kept in military matters, even during the beſt period of their exiſtence as a nation. The taking of Jericho itſelf was effected on a Sabbath-day, one of the firſt warlike enterpriſes after the law was promulgated, undertaken by the ſpecial direction, and perfected by the powerful influence of heaven itſelf*. On the ſame day we are alſo informed, that Jonathan took his bow and arrows, and under pretence of ſhooting, gave David notice of Saul's intention againſt his life, which he could not have done without ſuſpicion, had not the Sabbath been a common day with them, for the arts and the exerciſes of war†.

* Heylin on the Sabbath, 1. 6. § 5.

† 1 Sam. xx. 35. This event happened on a day when the old ſhew bread was taken away, and freſh bread put in its ſtead, which was only done on Sabbath-days. 1 Sam.

With respect to the principles and the practice of Christians in military affairs, there is every reason to believe that warlike exercises were as lawful to them as they could be to other people. In scripture we find no anti-military commands; and Tertullian informs us, “*Quod non prohibetur, permiffum est.*” To defend ourselves is our right by nature, whose laws the Christian religion was never intended to destroy. John the Baptist, instead of abrogating war, permitted soldiers to continue in their military profession*. And, in the words of our Saviour, a greater prophet than he was never born of woman†. Christ himself permitted his disciples to purchase arms‡, how then can the using them be unlawful? The first Gentile that was baptized was a Centurion§; nor does it appear that he was enjoined to lay down his arms, or to quit his military employments. Private revenge, or war among individuals, it is true, is frequently condemned in the gospel; but the taking up arms in the defence of one’s country by the direction of a magistrate, whose orders we are

xxi. 6. On a Sabbath-day also, Ahab defeated the Syrians with great slaughter. I Kings xx. 29.

* Luke iii. 14.

† Luke vii. 28.

‡ Nay, it is said, “He that hath no sword, *let him sell his garment* and buy one.” Luke xxii. 36.

§ Acts x. 2. and xi. 1.

commanded to obey*, none but enthusiasts can boggle at.

Among the primitive Christians 'tis true, some men avoided places of authority and power, and were not fond of engaging in military matters; but as Cave observes†, this was only the opinion of some private individuals, and not the general practice, nor supported by the authority of the church. The victory obtained by Marcus Antoninus over the Quadi and Marcomanni is imputed to the valour as well as to the prayers of his Christian Soldiers‡.

When Maximinian was sent to Gaul to suppress a dangerous rebellion there, he took with him a band of Christians, consisting of 6666 men, remarkable for their valour and discipline§. Julian's army was almost wholly composed of Christians, nor did his soldiers refuse to obey any orders given them, when they were not urged to idolatry||.

* Romans xiii. 1. Titus iii. 1. and 1 Peter ii. 13.

† Cave's Primitive Christianity, p. 34.

‡ Cave, p. 58. Addison's Remarks in his Travels, p. 206, &c. There is great reason to believe, from certain medals and inscriptions on Antonine's pillar, from Julius Capitolinus's history, and Claudian's poems, that this story is not without foundation.

§ Though some authors deny *the martyrdom of the Theban Legion*. Vide Gibbon's history, vol. 1. p. 566. Vindic. p. 121. Yet that such a body of Christians were actually in arms is highly probable.

|| Cave, p. 72.

Nor in military matters was there ever any peculiar deference shown to the sanctity of the Lord's-day; for Justinian enacted, that what pertained to military discipline should not be neglected on any of the festivals observed by Christians*. Indeed the prohibition of avoiding to do any manner of work on the seventh day, could not be extended to warlike affairs, unless Christians were bound to observe the sabbath with a more than Jewish rigour and austerity.

Both in England and on the Continent, many battles are recorded in history to have been fought on Sunday†. Heylin, with great reason, infers from a canon of the council of Carthage, held anno 398, that shooting and other manly exercises were permitted‡. The citizens of Geneva were, of old, accustomed to exercise themselves in shooting with cross bows, and the like, on the Lord's Day; neither did the clergy find fault therewith, so that none were hindered from hearing the word of God at the time appointed§.

Nor was Sunday formerly in England solely dedicated to religious duties; on the contrary, in the

* Digest. 2. 12. § 9.

† Charles Mortel defeated Hilpericus, King of France, on Palm Sunday, anno 1718. The famous battle of Lincoln, anno 1142, in which Stephen was taken prisoner, was fought on a Sunday. Many other instances occur in history.

‡ Heylin on the Sabbath, 2. 6. § 9.

§ Heylin, 2. 6. § 9.

reign of Henry the Second we are informed, that companies of young men were accustomed on Sunday, after dinner, to ride out into the fields on horses fit for war, and the citizens of London were wont to issue out through the gates by troops, furnished with lances and warlike shields, where they made a representation of battle, exercise, and skirmish, and many resorted there who had not as yet attained to the warlike girdle, to train and skirmish‡. Upon the holidays also, during the summer, the youth were exercised in leaping, shooting, wrestling, casting of stones, throwing of javelins, and other military exercises. Thus our ancestors were accustomed to spend their Sundays and other holidays; and thus that brave militia was formed that fought at Cressley, and at Agincourt, and remained conquerors in the bloody field of Poitiers.

Nay, military exercises on Sundays, at different times, have been specially enjoined by parliamentary authority. For by 12 Ric. 2. c. 6. it was enacted, “ That all servants and labourers shall “ have bows and arrows, *and use the same on Sundays and other holidays*”; and the sheriffs, mayors, bailiffs, and constables, had power given them to arrest all doers against that statute.

‡ Extract from William Fitz Stephen’s description of London, prefixed to the life of Becket. Vide also Annual Register, vol. 7. p. 182, and Lord Lyttleton’s Hist. 3 Edit. vol. 3. p. 60.

Which act was afterwards confirmed, by 11 Henry IV. c. 4, and ordered to be firmly holden and kept in all time coming. By a declaration of James the Ist. anno 1618, repeated by Charles his son, it was determined that *archery*, vaulting, leaping, and other manly exercises on the Lord's-day were not unlawful; and the Scotch militia was formerly exercised on Sundays and other holidays, and butts were erected for that special purpose in the neighbourhood of churches*.

Nor ought it to be omitted, that when the present militia was established, the same principles were adopted. The first bill that passed the House of Commons; enacted, that the militia should be exercised on Sunday, tho' in consequence of the opposition given it by the Dissenters, that clause was afterwards dropt. The whole bill had met with so many obstructions in its progress, from the ignorance and political prejudices of many, that our senators were resolved to give no man an opportunity of objecting to it on the score of religion.

The opposition therefore given by the Dissenters, to the clause for exercising the militia on Sunday, is the more to be wondered at, both because it was the ancient method of disciplining the militia in their own country, and as in other Pro-

* 1 James 1. c. 18.---6 James 5. c. 91. In the general name holidays, Sunday was then included.

testant, nay Calvinistical states, similar regulations at that very time were carried into execution, without any danger to religion *. Indeed to qualify one's self on any day to defend our country can have nothing contrary to the purest system of religion. It has not in view, conquest, and devastation, revolutions in states and empires, and the destruction of the species, but only public and private defence. If it is lawful to do well on the sabbath, as our Saviour informs us, surely nothing better can be done on any day, than to fit ourselves for resisting tyranny and oppression. If works of necessity and mercy only are permitted; what can be more necessary than to be always prepared to defend ourselves, our families, and our country?

Nay, to prepare ourselves for the defence of our religious as well as civil liberties, may be considered to be a most important and necessary branch of our duty as Christians. Such a preparation ought to be accounted a pious and devout exercise, perfectly fit to be practised on the Lord's Day. By thus employing a part of that time which at present is too often spent in idleness and debauchery, the youth will be prevented from heedlessly running into many dangerous and per-

* Geneva, the mother of Presbyterian churches, at that very time exercised its militia on Sunday, without any detriment to religion. And the practice is still general in Switzerland.

nicious vices. Military exercises, says, an ingenious author, can never be judged a profanation of the day set apart for religious purposes; since self preservation is the first law of God, given as well for the defence of nations, as of each individual, and not to be exercised in any way so effectually as by military discipline. Is not that exercise fully as innocent as any of those amusements generally permitted on the sabbath, much more conducive to the public good, and to the preservation of the Protestant religion, *against the open assaults of Popery?* Perhaps a better means cannot be devised, to frustrate even the secret machinations of Jesuitical Missionaries in the work of conversion, than by making it the duty of all the common people to attend public worship on Sunday, when they may be instructed both in the true principles of the Protestant religion, and in the arts of discipline by which alone it can be defended against a powerful and begotting adversary*. This argument, if every other proved ineffectual, must surely have no small degree of influence on our brethren of the North, who have lately shewn such a stern abhorrence of Roman Catholic intrusion.

To conclude, the proper idea of a sabbath or weekly festival for Christians to adopt, is, a day dedicated to God and to the public. A day ap-

* Plan of a national militia. Part I. Introduction.

propriated to cultivate the principles of religion, to encourage a spirit of industry, and to propagate a knowledge of the art of discipline among the people. For these are the three things which the rulers of a free state ought to promote among those they govern.

The first is necessary to make them virtuous, without which they can neither love their God, nor their neighbour, nor have a regard to the society they belong to. The second is necessary to make them rich, without which they cannot enjoy the comforts and conveniencies of this life, in any tolerable degree of perfection; and the third is requisite to make them brave, for men without courage are ruled by fear, and can neither defend their wealth, their liberty, nor their religious principles against a daring invader.

The first may be done, by joining in worshipping the same deity, by listening to the same observations, to explain our duty, and the same exhortations to practise it. The second, by rewarding those who have been industrious, and publickly reprovng the idle. And the third may easily be effected by appropriating a certain part of the Sabbath-day to the exercises of war.

C H A P. IV.

Considerations on a Scotch Militia.

IT will be proper to begin the investigation of this subject by a general review of the laws which have been enacted, and the regulations which are now in force, respecting a Scotch militia.

Perhaps no legislature ever took more pains to incite, and to preserve a military spirit, than the parliament of Scotland. It obliged every individual in the kingdom, in proportion to his rank and fortune, to have certain kinds of arms in his possession*; and at certain stated periods to produce them to the public†. It encouraged the fabrication of such arms in the kingdom‡, and the importation of them from foreign countries§. It enacted, that on Sundays and other holidays||, every man should be trained in the arts and exercises of war, under the direction of some able

* 9 Jac. 1. c. 120, 121, 122, 123. 11 Jac. 3. c. 80.

† 2 Jac. 1. c. 44. 3 Jac. 1. c. 60. 14 Jac. 2. c. 64. 6 Jac. 3. c. 44. 3 Jac. 4. c. 31. 6 Jac. 4. c. 75. 6 Jac. 5. c. 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90.

‡ 11 Jac. 3. c. 80.

§ 7 Jac. 5. c. 95.

|| Sunday was then included in the general term of holiday.

officer, called the captain of the parish*. Nay, the seeds of a standing army, were laid by raising a small body of men, whose sole duty was to attend as a guard, on the person of their sovereign †.

In the reign of Charles the Second, however, the Scottish legislature was not satisfied with general regulations. Experience had fully proved to them, (during their contests with the Protector of England,) that it was necessary to have a certain body of men peculiarly dedicated to the exercises of war, otherwise they could not resist the firm attacks of a veteran army. It was therefore enacted, by a bill which passed anno 1672, intituled an Act for settling the Militia; that 20,000 foot, and 2000 horse, should be raised by proportions, in the different shires of the kingdom, to be always in readiness for the service of their sovereign, whenever their assistance was demanded ‡. Nay, in addition to this force, to

* 1 Jac. 1. c. 18. 6 Jac. 5. c. 91.

† 8 Jac. 6. c. 137. This guard consisted of only forty gentlemen; but every one knows, that the enormous standing army of France sprung from almost as despicable an original.

‡ 1 Car. 2. sess. 3. c. 26. 2 Car. 2. c. 2. 2 Car. 2. sess. 3. c. 1. This body of men greatly resembled the present militia of England. Their establishment occasioned much jealousy in the southern part of the island; for, by the acts above-mentioned, the King was empowered to send them to England, or even to Ireland, if he judged it proper or necessary.

which

which the name of *militia* was given: the parliament farther declared, “ That the kingdom would
 “ be ready, every man betwixt sixteen and sixty,
 “ to join and hazard their lives and fortunes, as
 “ they shall be called for, by His Majesty, for
 “ the safety and preservation of his sacred person,
 “ authority, and government *.”

Lastly, by the famous Act, for the security of the kingdom, passed anno 1704, it was ordained,
 “ That the whole Protestant heritors, and all the
 “ boroughs within the kingdom, shall forthwith
 “ provide themselves with fire arms for all the
 “ *fencible* men who are Protestants, within their
 “ respective bounds, and the said heritors and
 “ boroughs, are hereby impowered and ordained
 “ to discipline and exercise their said fencible men,
 “ once in a month at least. The said heritors al-
 “ ways taking the oaths of allegiance and assu-
 “ rance, before the sheriff of the shire, or any
 “ other judge, within whose jurisdiction they re-
 “ side §.”

* 1 Car. 2. c. 26. The acts in the reign of King William, respecting national defence (acts of convention, c. 11. 20, 23, 24. 1 W. c. 7. 1 W. sess. 5. c. 33. 1 W. sess. 6. c. 23.) contain nothing remarkable, except a singular agreement between the King and the Parliament of Scotland; by which, in consideration of an annual supply of 1000 recruits, the militia of the country were not to be raised, except in the event of an actual invasion.

§ The above clause, in the Act of Security, was suspended by 1 Anne, sess. 4. c. 3, and c. 10. until the first day of January 1708; afterwards by 1 Geo. 1. c. 54.

Thus it appears, that by the law of Scotland, as it now stands, it is in the King's power to levy a militia of 20,000 foot, and 2,000 horse in that country, to be sent to any part of his British dominions that he may think proper. That he is also intitled to demand the service of every individual from sixteen to sixty; nay, farther, that every protestant in Scotland is at this moment impowered to have fire arms in his possession, and may be trained at least once a month in the exercises of war. Having thus stated how the law exists with respect to this subject, I shall next examine how far it is proper and necessary to alter or amend, at this particular period, these ancient regulations.

After the act of 1663, the military strength of Scotland, was of two kinds, fencibles and militia; to which, since its union with England, standing forces may be added.

The inhabitants of the shires, north of Leven in Dumbar-tonshire, and of Forth in Stirlingshire, were disarmed, which was continued by 11 Geo. 1. c. 26. for seven years longer, and from thence to the end of the then next session of parliament. These regulations were renewed by 19 Geo. 2. c. 39. 21 Geo. 2. c. 34. and 26 Geo. 2. c. 29. by which last act, the disarming laws were continued for seven years, from the first of August, 1753, and from thence to the end of the then next session of parliament; consequently they expired on the 19th day of March, 1761. The acts as to the highland dress, 19 Geo. 2. c. 39. 20 G. 2. c. 51. and 21 Geo. 2. c. 33. not being limited in their duration, still remain in full force.

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The fencibles did not, as at present, consist of a limited body of men, raised by any powerful lord in a particular district; but they comprehended, in the words of an old act of parliament, "Every man, able of person, to bear arms," in every county of the kingdom*. Under proper restrictions, it is evident that every individual in a free state ought to be trained to the use of arms. But having already given an opinion upon that subject it may be only necessary to add, that to establish a durable and permanent institution of that nature, is attended with greater difficulties than at first sight one is apt to imagine. It is therefore probable that such a scheme will not be attempted without serious consideration, nor until the nation at large has had sufficient time to bestow upon it mature deliberation. That should not, however, prevent arms being distributed in any district peculiarly exposed to the attacks of an enemy.

* 6 Jac. 5. c. 86. The distinction between the fencibles and the militia, particularly appears from the 11th act of the convention of estates, 30th March, 1689; it is intitled, "A Proclamation for calling together the Militia on this side Tay, and the Fencible Men in some Shires." In that act there is a clause, "That whereas there is no militia foot in the shires of Lanerk, Air, &c. therefore power is granted to the commissioners of militia, to bring together all the fencible men in their respective shires, and to model them into companies, &c. In the book intitled, "An Account of the Proceedings of the Parliament of Scotland, which met at Edinburgh, May 6, 1703," there is, page 226, a similar definition of fencible men.

But the question for our consideration at present is, whether Scotland ought to have what has been called *a militia* both in that country and in England; or, in other words, a *body of men collected from all the different districts in the kingdom, serving by rotation, peculiarly appropriated for internal defence, and not totally subjected (except in times of imminent danger) to the duties of a soldier.*

Many are the advantages attending such an institution.

By establishing a body of men who are never to be sent out of the kingdom, officers may acquire a certain degree of military knowledge and experience, who would never think of enlisting into a standing army, or would not chuse to run the risk of being sent to contend with the frigid regions of Canada, or the sultry climes of Indostan.

By collecting such a corps from every district in the kingdom, a military spirit is not confined to any particular spot, but is proportionally extended throughout every corner of the country.

By compelling every individual to serve by rotation, as a soldier for the state, the duties of a citizen are universally made known, and the meanest individual must perceive, that he is intitled to the enjoyment of his rights and privileges, since he is bound to appear in their defence.

Such soldiers, also, not being totally dedicated to military purposes, except in cases of urgent necessity,

cessity, can never become so useless a burden upon the nation, as standing forces are deservedly accounted.

Lastly, it is impossible without such an institution, to keep up for any length of time a military spirit in an industrious nation. It may, perhaps, be roused to arms on particular occasions, but the enthusiasm with which it may be inspired in dangerous emergencies, can only be of a very temporary nature; whereas we see by the experience of some years, that regulations, such as are enacted in England, will fully answer the intention of a wise Legislature. Such weak objections as are now stated against a Scotch militia, were loudly urged when the present English system was first instituted. Many able men, full of ancient prejudices, dreading even salutary innovations, and proud of appearing the *laudatores temporis aeti*, objected to a plan, the utility of which is now unquestionable, tho' at first ridiculed by a Chesterfield's wit, and arraigned by the abilities of a Hardwick.

The objections which have been urged against the general principle of such a system, are by no means well founded.

By some the expence of such a military defence for Scotland is complained of, which for 6000 men would amount to 34,970*l.* in time of peace, and 104,440*l.* in time of war. But to this it may be answered, that it is a plan founded upon

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the most œconomical principles of any durable system of defence, and that no money can be grudged which is expended for the purpose of protecting a free people from domestic tyranny, as well as foreign depredations.

It is imagined by others, that it will be difficult to procure the inferior officers, and even the common men. The men undoubtedly may be had, for they are still in the country, and, indeed, it is absurd to suppose, that in so extensive and populous a kingdom as Scotland, containing upon a moderate calculation 300,000 fighting men, there should be any difficulty to raise 6000 men for its own defence*. As to the inferior officers, perhaps some alteration ought to be made in the constitution of the Scotch militia, Perhaps even in England it might be proper to diminish the number of inferior militia officers, and to increase the pay of such as are retained. For surely a militia, who may possibly never see an enemy, cannot require so many officers, as may be necessary in a standing army, one half of whom may be destroyed in a single engagement. Nay, the inferior officers in a militia, whose service as well as pay is merely of a temporary nature, ought to be rather more

* The only alteration which occurs to me with respect to the common men, is, that none but batchelors ought to be ballotted for, if there are a sufficient number of that description in the district in which they are to be raised.

amply

amply paid than a body of men, who must receive a certain emolument from the public after their services are no longer necessary*.

The last objection to such an institution is, that it may possibly prove destructive to industry. This objection appears to me peculiarly contemptible. The wealthier and the more industrious a nation is, the more it is exposed to every possible misfortune, unless protected by the military spirit of its inhabitants. Indeed of what avail is all the wealth and industry imaginable, if at the same time means are not adopted, for the purpose of preserving the fruits of that industry from depredation and plunder.

After considering this subject, with all the attention in my power, it appears to me, that the establishment of a Scotch militia, on principles in general similar to that of England, ought not to be any longer delayed. The subject is once more brought under the consideration of parliament, and there is every reason to expect success,

* If at any time it was found difficult to procure a sufficient number of officers, or of men, such a difficulty might be easily overcome, by prohibiting any person to sit in either house of parliament, or to vote at any election, who had not served for three years in some corps of militia, either as an officer or a soldier, in his own person, or by a substitute. As to recruiting the army, it might be done with very little difficulty, by obliging every parish in Scotland, and every hundred in England, for every three parishes it contained, to furnish one recruit.

from the weakness of the arguments which are urged against it, and from the present temper, as well as necessity of the times.

The arguments which have been made use of against this necessary measure, by the representatives of England, are. 1st, That it would impede the recruiting service. 2dly, That it would endanger the liberties of England. And 3dly, That the expence of such an establishment, ought to be raised by a local tax, and ought not to be paid out of the general revenues of the state.

That Scotland has long been the nursery of the armies of England, is a melancholy truth, which that part of the island has had sufficient reason to regret, and to the friends of Caledonia, it is perhaps the strongest objection to the establishment of a Scotch militia, that it would keep up a military spirit in that country, which would perpetually fill the thinned ranks of the forces of Great-Britain. It is however certain, that if the northern part of the island, is still to be marked by any obnoxious distinction, the spirit of the people will be roused, and it will not be difficult, for the nobility and gentry of that country, to prevent almost any addition in future, to the number of recruits*.

* The Scotch militia bill would have passed ann. 1776, had it not been for the clause which permitted the regular forces to recruit out of the militia of that country, which
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That a Scotch militia of 6000 men, would endanger the liberty of England, is no great compliment to its stability or strength. I hope that it is not built on so sandy a foundation. If so small a body of men however, could possibly give any disturbance to England, it must be much more alarmed to find that every individual professing the Protestant religion, is intitled to train himself to arms, and that the King is empowered to demand the assistance of 20,000 foot, and 2000 horse, and if necessary the service of every man from sixteen to sixty, to any part of his British dominions, without any new act impowering him so to do. The number above stated, namely, 20,000 foot, and 2000 horse, were thought necessary for the defence of Scotland, by the parliament of that country, but at this time perhaps 6000 militia with 4000 fencibles may be sufficient. A less number cannot be accepted of; indeed Ireland, a country inferior in point of extent to Scotland, has always had 12,000 men for its internal protection*.

the representatives of that part of the island could not possibly assent to, unless the same regulation had been extended to England.

* According to Templeman's Survey, England contains 31,648,000 acres. Scotland, 17,788,160 acres. Ireland, 17,572,480 acres: consequently Scotland is more extensive than Ireland by 215,680 acres.

As to the expence of such an establishment, which must be paid, not by a local tax, but must be drawn from the general revenues of the state, any objection of that kind, will not stand a serious investigation. Though the expence of the present militia in England, is paid from the land-tax; yet a land-tax was raised in that country, long before that excellent institution was thought of; nor can there possibly exist any connexion between the English land-tax, and the English militia, unless when the latter was established, a new tax of a local nature, in addition to the usual tax of four shillings in the pound, had been laid upon land, for the express purpose of defraying the charges of that species of protection. If the principle however is a just one, that no one is bound to pay taxes, unless he is sufficiently protected, it may be said in behalf of a Scottish militia, *that whilst a single shilling remains of the revenue which is raised from that country, by any means whatsoever, it must in the first place be appropriated for its defence.* How different also is the behaviour of England, to other parts of the British empire. When the Colonies of North America rebelled, they were told, give us your trade, and we will pay for your protection. It is well known what advantages Ireland has lately received without any apparent compensation. But
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when the defence of Scotland is brought upon the carpet, tho' its trade is so beneficial to England*, tho' it is the great nursery of its naval and military strength, and though it pays a revenue of above half a million per annum †, yet any expence that can be laid out upon that country, tho' raised from Scotland itself, become the immediate source of jealousy and regret. At a time however, when there is reason to hope that every national distinction is on the brink of being exploded, it

* "What we lose by France, says Sir Thomas Clifford, we gain upon Scotland. *Scotland is our Indies*; as Colbert "calls England the King of France's Indies." Grey's Debates, vol. 1. p. 39. The single article of broad cloth, draws half a million per annum from Scotland to England.

† The following is supposed to be the annual revenue raised from Scotland :

	£.
Customs	120,000
Excise	150,000
Land-Tax	48,000
Post-Office	20,000
Stamps, &c.	25,000
East India goods, groceries, &c. paid in the ports of England for Scotland	150,000
	513,000

This is exclusive of the advantages which England receives by a most beneficial trade with Scotland, and by having above one-half of the rents of that country expended in England. But above all, by furnishing so large a proportion of men, as has enabled England hitherto to carry on extensive wars, without injuring her commerce or manufactures.

would

would be improper to dwell upon the existence of unfortunate prejudices, which are daily passing away.

That the ablest men of both countries, taking into their most serious consideration, the subjects treated of in this little essay, may contrive the means of placing the military strength of the empire, upon a firm and stable basis, and that every national prejudice, and every unreasonable distinction may be done away, is the sincere wish of one, who will ever be willing to contribute his mite to the prosperity of his country.

T H E E N D.

